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**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM**

**Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International  
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:  
innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development  
Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Bali, Indonesia**  
**24 to 26 May 2023**

**PRE-RECORDED STATEMENT BY THE**  
**ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE WITH REGARD TO THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF  
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOURTH  
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM**

**INNOVATIVE STEPS TO ENSURE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES – GA  
RESOLUTION 75/123**

**Video message by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Non-Self-Governing Territories face specific challenges in achieving the SDGs. Their particular governance status raises issues around ensuring responsive, inclusive and representative decision-making at all levels, as foreseen under SDG 16. This, in turn, affects implementation of many other Goals, including those related to education, health, equality, and natural resources.

Yet, their non-self-governing status also means that information on attainment of the SDGs is not always readily available. For example, recent Voluntary National Reports of administering Powers have made only scant reference to progress on SDGs in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

This adds to the risk of leaving these Territories further behind, missing out of the central, transformative premise of the 2030 Agenda.

All Non-Self-Governing Territories are islands or marine territories that acutely face the challenges addressed by the SDGs, in particular those related to climate change and current interlocking crises. We need to understand these challenges in greater depth so as to be better prepared to counter them with the required urgency.

The United Nations human rights treaty system provides a path towards progress.

All administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories have ratified human rights treaties. In doing so, they have accepted legal obligations to respect and ensure human rights of all individuals in their territories or under their jurisdiction - including those of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

These obligations relate to all human rights – not only the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that correspond closely to the 17 SDGs, but also the right to self-determination as also enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

And they include an obligation on administering Powers to report periodically on implementation of ratified treaties to the human rights treaty bodies.

As a result, treaty bodies have raised with administering Powers a series of concerns and made recommendations concerning Non-Self-Governing Territories.

This has the dual benefit of highlighting both progress and challenges relevant to achievement of the SDGs and making recommendations intimately relevant to SDG implementation, linked to the administering Powers' treaty obligations. Indeed, treaty bodies provide granular, detailed analysis which looks into the structural root causes of inequality, with a focus on those who may be at risk of being left behind, including those of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In relation to the use of natural resources, treaty bodies have highlighted that administering Powers have an obligation not to waste rare materials or transfer control over natural resources to other States or foreign companies without securing the prior, free and informed consent of, and benefit sharing with, those of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Human rights treaty bodies have also made recommendations to administering Powers to take action to resolve differential treatment provided to individuals on the mainland and those in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Differential treatment has arisen in areas such as the minimum age of criminal responsibility and corporal punishment, voting in independence referenda, or where administering Power have specifically restricted enjoyment of rights in Non-Self-Governing Territories through treaty reservations upon ratification.

The United Nations treaty bodies have also highlighted issues such as high unemployment and poverty rates in Territories, disparities in access to health care, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, the impact of nuclear testing on women's health, and recognition of regional and indigenous languages and groups.

Clearly, the work of treaty bodies relates to issues relevant to achieving many of the SDGs. An innovative step in progressing the SDGs in Non-Self-Governing Territories would therefore be to create greater integration of human rights and SDG monitoring and reporting processes at the national level.

This entails administering Powers strengthening cooperation between national SDG committees and national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up. OHCHR has developed a digital collaborative tool intended for States that can support this approach: the [National Recommendations Tracking Database](#). It also means administering Powers and development-oriented civil society raising SDG-related human rights issues with treaty bodies through the periodic reporting process.

In parallel, we would welcome stronger commitment by administering Powers to report, comprehensively, on SDG progress in Non-Self-Governing Territories in their Voluntary National Reports, drawing on the findings of treaty bodies and other UN human rights mechanisms. Such information is readily accessible through the [Universal Human Rights Index](#).

These steps could increase the availability and flow of information on SDG attainment in Non-Self-Governing Territories, contributing not only to ensuring no one is left behind, but also to achieving – as proclaimed by the United Nations Charter – the right to self-determination.

Thank you.